Project for soil testing in Tripura

2318. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to sanction the project amounting to Rs. 116.70 lacs for strengthening/ modernisation of soil testing in Tripura;

(b) if so, by when it will be sanctioned; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) to (c) The proposal amounting to Rs. 116.70 lakhs for strengthening/ modernisation of soil, testing in Tripura was received in this Ministry. The proposal was not found as per the norms of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Balanced and Integrated use of Fertilizers'. The State Government of Tripura has, therefore, been requested to send a fresh proposal as per norms of the scheme which is still awaited. Besides, the State already has unspent funds amounting to Rs. 16.99 lakhs in the beginning of the curnt financial year, out of the funds released earlier under the Scheme. The utilisation of the above funds has been requested.

Decline in Cultivable Area in Himachal Pradesh

2319. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the total area under cultivation is coming down in Himachal Pradesh resulting a sharp decline in agricultural production in the backward areas and hilly areas of the State; and

(b) what steps Government have taken or proposed to take to solve this problem in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) The production of important crops such as foodgrains, oilseeds and sugarcane in the state of Himachal Pradesh during last four years has not declined. However, areas under these crops have marginally declined.

(b) The Farmers are being encouraged to bring more area for cultivation under foodgrains, through the incentives provided under various programmes such as Integrated Crop Development Programme for wheat, Oilseeds Production Programme and National Pulses Development Project in the State.

Under the programmes/project, incentives are provided to farmers for use of high yielding varieties of seeds, application of integrated pest management, propagation of scientific water management including micro irrigation and use of improved farm implements. Research is also being continuously undertaken to develop improved technologies so as to enhance the productivity and production of foodgrains.

Policy for Marginal and Small Farmers

2320. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have evolved a new policy affecting marginal and small farmers in the States, particularly, in Himachal Pradesh which consists of vast number of backward areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, whether Government propose to offer them in Himachal Pradesh any special package of reliefs and incentives;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) to (e) There is no policy or special package other than ongoing central sector/ centrally sponsored schemes for the benefit of all categories of farmers, including small and marginal, in all states, including Himachal Pradesh. Some of the schemes benefiting small and marginal farmers in Himachal Pradesh are:-

1. Central Sector rice minikit programme;
2. Integrated Cereal Development Programme in Wheat Based Cropping System Areas (ICDP-Wheat);
3. Accelerated Maize Development Programme;
4. Oil seeds Production Programme;
5. Development of Mushroom;
6. Integrated Development of Vegetables including root, and tuber crops;
7. Integrated Development of fruits (Tropical and Arid Zone fruits);
8. Promotion of Agricultural mechanisation among small farmers;
9. Central sector scheme on women in agriculture: